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A M E M O I R

OF THE LIFE OF

SAMUEL AUSTIN HITCHCOCK,

OF BRIMFIELD, MASS.

BY REV. CHARLES M. HYDE D. D.

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## SAMUEL AUSTIN HITCHCOCK.

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IN these days of general social extravagance in living and of reckless expenditure of money for private and public uses, it is well to notice such honorable exceptions to the prevailing spirit and habits of the times as may serve to check these characteristic tendencies, recalling us to higher ideals of life, and to a juster appreciation of its true significance and worth. The record of such a life as that of Samuel Austin Hitchcock is here presented to the readers of the *Congregational Quarterly*, not because of its approximation to the highest ideal, so much as because of its contrast to present prevailing notions and usages. His is not a name, indeed, that will be associated with the great intellects or the heroic spirits that have, through their connection with the institutions of New England, exerted a world-wide influence on the thoughts and actions of men; but the organizations which his munificence has originated or fostered will bear the impress of his spirit, and perpetuate his influence far onward into the future.

Samuel Austin Hitchcock was born in Brimfield, Hampden County, Massachusetts, January 9, 1794. His father, Gad Hitchcock, was a native of Union, a town in Connecticut adjoining Brimfield, and in early life served the usual apprenticeship in the tailor's trade with Mr. Gates, a clothier, of East Brimfield; but for many years he was a hatter by trade. The two occupations named were in those days more intimately connected even than in the ready-made clothing-stores of our modern New England villages. As these trades of the olden times failed to give him the means of livelihood, he evinced the universal adaptability of the self-reliant sons of New England, in his readiness to do any work that offered itself day by day. He was fortunate in his choice of a wife, Keziah Bates, daughter of Lieut. Samuel Bates, of East Brimfield. Three children, a boy and two girls, shared with these parents the discomforts that a family in straitened circumstances must experience even

in favored New England. The mother was a notable house-keeper, and the household thrived under her care. The advantages of New England social influences and home training gave such impulse and direction to constitutional good qualities of mind and body as to more than counterbalance any lack in social position.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Charles Hammond, of Monson, Mass., a native of Union, Conn., furnishes most of the facts and references for the following genealogical table:—

I. LUKE HITCHCOCK was a resident of New Haven, Conn., as early as 1644, six years after its settlement. There was an Edward Hitchcock at New Haven in 1643. Matthias Hitchcock, who signed the Plantation Covenant, 1639, and was one of the purchasers of South-end Neck, came to Boston in the "Susan and Ellen," from London. Very likely these were "three brothers who came over." Luke Hitchcock removed from New Haven to Wethersfield, where he died Nov. 1659, leaving widow, Elizabeth; and children, Hannah, John, and Luke. His widow married, Oct. 2, 1661, William Warriner, of Springfield, Mass. — *See Savage's Geneal. Dict., s. n. N. E. G. and A. R., 14: 369.*

II. LUKE HITCHCOCK (son of Luke, I) was born June 5, 1655, made freeman at Springfield, 1678, and was sheriff of Hampshire County several years. He married, 1677, Sarah, young widow of Benjamin Dorchester. Had three sons, Luke, Ebenezer, and Pelatiah, and six daughters, all living in 1722, when he made his will. He died Jan. 24, 1727. It is worthy of note that each one of the three sons had a son who graduated at Harvard College and became a minister of the gospel. Pelatiah's son was Rev. Enos Hitchcock, D. D., of Beverly, Mass., and afterwards of Providence, R. I., who graduated in 1767; Ebenezer's son was Rev. Gad Hitchcock, D. D., of Pembroke, now Hanson, Mass. Luke's son was Rev. Caleb Hitchcock, of Union, Conn. These last two graduated in 1643. — *See E. M. Stone's History of Beverly.*

III. LUKE HITCHCOCK (son of Luke, II) was born in Springfield, July 13, 1691; married Martha Colton, Jan. 26, 1720, and died in Granville, Mass., 1775. He had children, Caleb, Luke. The son Luke, born Feb. 22, 1724, was the great-grandfather of Rev. Edward Hitchcock, D. D., President of Amherst College. The son Caleb was the great grandfather of S. A. Hitchcock, of Brimfield. This fact in regard to the common ancestry of the two men whose family name is so honorably connected with the history of Amherst College, was not known till after their death.

IV. Rev. CALEB HITCHCOCK was born in Springfield, Jan. 5, 1721; graduated at Harvard in 1743; was ordained at Union, Conn., pastor of the Congregational Church in that town, June 21, 1749. His ministry there closed in 1758; and he went into mercantile business, but failed. He left Union, and died in Brimfield, Dec. 6, 1767. He married at Union, Nov. 30, 1750, Sarah Winchester. After Mr. Hitchcock's death, she married Major John Thompson, of Palmer. Rev. Caleb Hitchcock left six children, Luke (from whom are descended several families in Palmer and Warren), Elizabeth, Martha, Molly, Winchester, Gad. Though from the published records of the Congregational churches of Connecticut, the cause is evident why he did not attain the same eminence in the ministry as his two cousins, tradition reports that he had naturally greater intellectual abilities than either. According to the town records of Brimfield, his death was occasioned by a fit of epilepsy.

The boy Samuel was a dutiful son, a hard-working, industrious lad, and early in life supported himself by his own efforts. His necessities prevented him from enjoying the privileges of any higher education than such as the common schools of his town afforded. It was a deprivation that he keenly felt, as he saw one and another of his youthful companions enrolling themselves among the students of Monson Academy, and it had much to do with the special sympathy which he afterwards cherished for young men debarred by poverty, as he had been, from the enjoyment of advantages which others could afford. He attended school only during the winter terms; working on a farm, "riding post," or being engaged as "store-boy," during the summer seasons. One winter, when he was seventeen years old, he was asked to take charge of a district school; and though the school had been somewhat notorious for the turbulency of the scholars, his administration was a successful one.

The next year, March 23, 1812, he left home in search of employment more remunerative than any he could find in his native town. He afterwards told the story of his decision in this regard, which he was wont to look back upon as a turning-point in his life. Passing one evening the house occupied by Squire Williams, then the leading merchant of the village, the thought flashed upon him, "Why cannot I give myself to business and achieve success?" Instantaneously came the response and the resolve, "*I can, and I will.*" With this devotion of his energies to a fixed pursuit in life awoke a consciousness of a power and a will to do, in itself prophetic of deserved success. At that moment was born within him a strength, a steadiness of purpose, of which his life had previously shown no trace. From that instant in that evening's walk, in spite of his utter destitution of all means to accomplish his object in life, save what he found in himself, the path of this Brimfield boy was

V. GAD HITCHCOCK was born at Union, Conn., July 10, 1766. He married Keziah Bates, Feb. 28, 1793. He died June 22, 1829. His widow died Sept. 24, 1858. His children were Samuel Austin; Sarah Winchester, who died in early womanhood; and Eudocia Melina, who married Royal P. Wales, Esq., whose four surviving children, after an interval of four years since the death of their parents, are called to experience renewed bereavement in the death of their uncle, whose heirs-at-law they now are, as being his sole surviving relatives.

onward and upward. He had been a boy among boys, ready for all athletic sports, yet quiet, resolute, independent. He never was misled by the execrable maxim that "the greatest sinners oftenest make the holiest saints." He ever rejoiced that he could look back upon a youth characterized by those principles and habits and that scrupulous regard for moral purity and integrity which must always lie at the foundation of any true success in life. He left home with one dollar, borrowed money, in his pocket, and all his spare clothing tied up in a blue striped handkerchief. As indicating the care he took of all that belonged to him or was intrusted to him, this identical handkerchief was found among his effects after his death.

He found employment with Mr. Bela Tiffany, of Dudley, a prominent merchant in the southern part of Worcester County. At the end of the year for which he had engaged, his employer called for his account. Most of the money due the young clerk had been drawn out and expended for his personal necessities; but his employer, taking the account, and satisfying himself of its correctness, wrote at the bottom, "For extra services during the year, fifty dollars," and handed it back to him. That extra fifty dollars was the beginning of his accumulations. He deposited it at once in the savings bank, and it there remained to his credit at the time of his death. It has been said that "enthusiasts are men of one idea; heroes are men of one design; they who prosper in the world are usually men of one maxim." It appears to have been a favorite maxim with Mr. Hitchcock, as with other successful men of business, never to withdraw an investment. Such a maxim, to be prudentially carried out, necessitates of course great care in the initial steps of any business undertaking, and thus serves to cultivate that fixedness of purpose which is an equally essential element of worldly success. It was at this period of his life that Mr. Hitchcock was brought into connection in various ways with men engaged in the manufacture of cotton and woollen goods.

In 1820 he went to Boston, and formed a co-partnership with Matthias Armsby and Thatcher Tucker, under the name of Armsby, Tucker & Co. This was the first Dry Goods Commission House established in New England whose special

business was the sale of the goods manufactured by the different cotton mills then recently established. It does not appear that any amount of capital was required, each partner agreeing only to contribute "his best exertions for the general furtherance, benefit, and management of the business"; yet when at the end of fifteen months the partnership was dissolved, by mutual consent, Mr. Hitchcock received \$3,000 as his share of the assets. A new co-partnership was formed, and the business carried on under the name of Tucker, Sayles & Hitchcock; which firm, after the various changes through which it has passed, is now the well-known house of Gardner Brewer & Co. Mr. Hitchcock retained his connection with the business until 1839.

Although those who knew Mr. Hitchcock in his early manhood speak of him as one who exhibited almost perfect physical development in form and carriage, his close attention to business finally impaired his health to such a degree that in 1831 he left Boston, and went to Southbridge, to act as agent of the Hamilton Woollen Company. His management of the financial department of the business in Boston, and his previous experience in connection with manufacturing concerns, had admirably fitted him for the position of chief executive in such an establishment. Though he found the affairs of the Hamilton Company in great embarrassment, yet he managed its business with such firmness, prudence, and energy that he soon saw gratifying evidence of its constantly increasing prosperity. This position, which he at first had reluctantly consented only temporarily to fill, till the suitable man should be found, he held for eleven years. He represented the town in the Legislature during the winter of 1836, and from 1836 to 1842 was President of the Southbridge Bank.

By constant application to business his health was impaired, and his bodily infirmities increased until, in 1842, he withdrew entirely from active business pursuits. Having never married, but prizing and needing the comforts of a home, he returned to Brimfield, where he had in 1832 purchased a house for his widowed mother. With her, and with his sister's family, he enjoyed for many years the restful quiet of a happy, well-ordered home. After his mother's death in 1858, and the sub-



sequent removal of his sister's family, he continued to live in the same house, and in the simple, unostentatious, methodical style which long-continued habit had made a second nature to him. A judicious investment of his property during the many years of his retirement resulted in its gradual increase, while his habits of utmost frugality made but slight draft on his augmented resources. Thus he became possessed of a large fortune. Wealth, and the influence over others which it gives to any one known to possess it in abundance, made no change in his views and feelings. Like the patriarch Jacob, "a plain man, living in tents," Mr. Hitchcock preferred the seclusion and the simplicity of rural life to the hot fever of city extravagance. If ever questioned why he did not engage in the stir and bustle of the great centres of commercial activity, his reply was like that of Barzillai, the aged Gileadite of Rogelim, to King David's solicitations to take up his abode at Jerusalem, "Can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? Let thy servant, I pray thee, die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother." In his own native town Mr. Hitchcock preferred to live till death brought to him release from life's burdens, and he was buried as he had desired to be, "by the grave of his father and of his mother."

His increasing feebleness had been specially marked during the last year of his life. When the portrait was finished which the Directors of the American Congregational Association had engaged to have taken of him for the library of the Congregational House in Boston, he seemed to be much affected by the thought of its completion, as if it reminded him of the near completion of his own life-work. Early in the morning of the next day after the artist left him he was prostrated by an attack of heart disease, from which no medical skill or effort of friends could give relief. After struggling a few hours against his malady, complicated as it was with other forms of disease, he sank into an unconscious state. On Sunday evening, Nov. 23, 1873, soon after sunset, he reached the limit, or as Christian faith teaches us in more truthful phrase to say, the gate of life.

The death of the aged, who have bound themselves to others

by many family ties, seems often like the pulling of an ivy from the wall to which it has grown, so that its removal loosens the whole mass to which it clings ; but Mr. Hitchcock's death seems rather like the fall of some old tree, that has become a familiar landmark, from its having held its place by the wayside in solitary grandeur through the storms of many a year. Not soon can those familiar with his habits forget his appearance as he took his daily walk, talked with the children on the street, or interested himself in whatever might for the time engage public attention. Of spare form, of clear complexion, of mild blue eye, of pleasant though care-worn face, he had always for all he met a kindly greeting. Visitors who came, as was frequently the case, to solicit money for some benevolent enterprise, were agreeably surprised to find such kindness of spirit and of manner in one whom they had supposed to be cold and stern, if not sour and repellant. If their request was refused, there was such sincere regret expressed, as to make it evident that the refusal was owing to consistency in maintaining an established principle of giving, rather than to any repugnance at the thought of parting with money accumulated by the savings of years of closest economy. As he had no one to fear, so he had no one to envy. He never took advantage of his social position to make another feel uncomfortable by any assumed superiority. As he grew older his interest in the young increased more and more. Nothing gave him greater pleasure ordinarily than the sight of the young people gathering for their daily task in the school which his munificence had founded.

It belonged to Mr. Hitchcock's predominant tone of mind that he should in his early years have marked out a course as best, because best fitted for himself ; and that from such a decision of his own mind he was not to be turned aside by motives that might influence other men. The same kind of natural qualifications and of special training is required for the successful conduct of large business concerns as for the generalship of an army. Cool-headedness in planning movements, not to say cold-heartedness in executing them, enter largely into a soldier's and into a merchant's qualifications for success ; yet honor is to either dearer than success. It was in keeping

with Mr. Hitchcock's ideal of whole-souled integrity, that in all his intercourse with others not the slightest manifestation of a malicious or a malignant spirit should ever discover itself, nor the faintest suspicion of impurity taint the honor of his good name. If this negative delineation of character may seem too commonplace, too deficient in brilliant traits to be worthy of any public notice, let it be observed that a power that can attract the gaze of a world by making the sun stand still in the heavens is not more marvellous in itself than the power that makes the sun know its appointed place, and vary not one moment from its appointed time day by day.

Mr. Hitchcock belonged to what will always be called "the old school" class of business men; he valued fairness and honesty above any pecuniary gain or personal reputation that smartness in taking advantage of another can give. No one who knew him, or who had any dealings with him, could entertain a suspicion that he would do anything dishonest or deceitful. In the management of his affairs he was scrupulously exact. If any one might hesitate to call him "the very soul of honor," every one in doing business with him found him the very embodiment of mercantile accuracy. In his dealings, he insisted upon having what of right belonged to him, while on the other hand he failed not to render to others what he felt was justly their due.

There are many to whom such a spirit in its strictness, unmodified by other and more sympathetic qualities, is an object of aversion and almost of abhorrence; but even those who would assign to generosity of disposition a higher worth than to a sense of justice must acknowledge that if one of these two must be chosen without the other, there can be no question but that justice apart from generosity is unspeakably preferable to generosity without justice.

In these days, when there is in high places and in low places a call for men of positive convictions and of sterling integrity, as strong a cry almost as went up from humanity eighteen hundred years ago for a Divine Redeemer, we are reminded again and again of those words of solemn inquiry, "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find *faith* on the earth?" In spite of all our multiplied means of culture,

notwithstanding the acknowledged progress which the world has made in approximating the scriptural standard of morality, the words of Solomon are as applicable now as in those days of an older, ruder civilization : "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness ; but *a faithful man* — who can find ?" Sir Isaac Newton said of himself, in the humility of a truly scientific spirit, that whatever advantage he had over others was only the power he had acquired of holding his mind persistently intent on the solution of a problem,— that most rare power, which was in fact the secret of his eminence in scientific discovery, and of his personal greatness, as compared with the vast majority of men who regard close thinking as only irksome drudgery. Mr. Hitchcock's power, that wherein he was superior to most men of the present day, lay in unswerving fidelity, — a quality so plain, so unpretentious, that many fail to appreciate it.

The strictness of equal and exact justice, which in some other men is modified by a genial, sympathetic temperament, was in Mr. Hitchcock modified by his sense of religious obligation. Wealth was not with him an object of desire for its own sake. He is not to be reckoned among "the covetous whom the Lord abhorreth." He did not make gold his idol ; he did not slavishly bow his soul before money as the one power above all others ; nor did he find his life in increasing "the abundance of the things" which he possessed. In many instances of even professedly religious men, who have brought disgrace and ruin upon themselves and their relatives by their dishonest practices under cover of their religious professions, there seems to be repeated the old classical fable of the eagle, firing its own nest by the coal concealed in the piece of flesh which it had stolen from the altar of sacrifice. But the wealth which Mr. Hitchcock was so successful in acquiring he held as a sacred trust. Believing with Paul that "every one hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that," Mr. Hitchcock believed that God had given to him a talent for saving money. Training himself to habits of prudent economy, he accumulated property by the slow process of adding a dollar earned to a dollar saved, rather than by any gambling scheme of risking a fortune for the chance of effect-

ing an inflation of value. "A close bargain" would express his idea of legitimate business, as distinguished from "putting up a margin," characteristic of the stock exchange of to-day. His business ability was first marked, in this direction of attention to little things, in his being good as a boy at "raking after," and subsequently in his leaving no debts uncollected as hopeless. By this fidelity in gathering up the loose ends, in caring for the small matters of business as well as the weightier matters of the law, he laid the foundation of his business success. Fidelity in every known duty was his rule of life. He never compared himself with others of his fellow-servants, as having received ten talents or five talents, while they had received only one. He never entered into that mad strife for precedence, with its baneful spirit of jealousy and envy, which makes even a race-horse when discomfited suffer the agony of a broken heart; but he felt deeply his own personal responsibilities, his obligation in 'God's sight' to be diligent and prudent in business. He meant to be faithful in his life-stewardship; and we may judge as to what men *say they mean* to be or to do by what they really *are*, and what they actually *accomplish*.

In the distribution of wealth, in which a consciousness of personal responsibility oftentimes involves men in as great perplexities as in its acquisition, and in regard to which opprobrium and obloquy, rather than appreciation and gratitude, are too often the fate of those who give in ways not agreeable to other people, Mr. Hitchcock believed it to be his duty to contribute to objects and institutions of established and permanent value, rather than to those of only transient importance. If any are disposed to question the high measure of esteem accorded to such as thus give of their abundance, let it be remembered that He who commended the poor widow's mite also thought it worthy of Himself to make His grave with the rich. He who from the poverty of His parents had only a manger for His cradle, yet from the wealth of the world received what true Christian affection cannot stigmatize as the empty honor of a tomb. He who gave bread as manna from heaven to weary, fainting ones in the wilderness laid down His own life, as the seed-corn is buried in the ground, that it might

do more than suffice for immediate needs, might spring up into a living, fruitful growth, ripening golden grain for the coming harvest time of the angel reapers.

Through the influence of Rev. Joseph Vaill, D. D., who was for years his pastor, Mr. Hitchcock became interested in the condition and prospects of Amherst College, and continued its steadfast friend and benefactor. His first gift of \$10,000 in 1840 was followed by others for various special objects, and for the general expenses of the college, till the whole amount reached \$175,000. Through his friend, Hon. Linus Child, he learned to take a deep interest in the work of Andover Theological Seminary, and his donations to that institution aggregate \$120,000. In each of these institutions there is a Hitchcock professorship, endowed through his beneficence. Other funds given were designed specially as scholarships to pay the term-bills of indigent students, or as a contingent fund "for any general use in making these institutions a power for good in the world." He took an interest in the relation which his benefactions sustained to each other. Hence, he founded an academy, gave funds for colleges, added to the endowments of theological seminaries, and aided in building houses of worship, — thus providing means for helping young men in their entire course of study, and securing for them, if preachers, houses of worship to give efficiency to their labors.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to ascertain from Mr. Hitchcock's papers the exact amount of his donations. In addition to those specified above, he gave to the Congregational Church in Brimfield \$5,000, as "a fund to aid in the support of an Evangelical Calvinistic Orthodox Trinitarian Congregational minister"; and \$500 as a fund, the annual income to be spent in the purchase of books by the pastor for a pastor's library. He gave a fund of \$10,000, in 1855, to establish a school in Brimfield, free to all youth, whether residents of the town or not, desirous of being fitted for the business of life or for entrance to any college. By subsequent donations this fund was increased by him till it amounted at the time of his death to \$80,000. This school was incorporated by an act of the Legislature under the name of the Hitchcock Free High School. Its last published catalogue shows an attendance of over one hundred pupils, a corps of five teachers; a four years' course of study in its English and Classical Departments, a graduating class of twelve. Mr. Hitchcock gave also, in 1871, \$50,000 to Illinois College; and in 1872, \$8,000 to Tabor College. He gave \$1,000 to the American Congregational Union, for the erection of houses of worship. Just before his death he had pledged \$5,000 to the Pacific Theological Seminary, of California; and about the same time he paid over to the Trustees of the American Congregational As-

It was not a characteristic of Mr. Hitchcock to seek notoriety through his gifts; indeed, he never once visited either Amherst or Andover, to examine personally into the manner in which his gifts had been used. He shrank from all display of self in any way. In deciding on the expediency of making any donation, the first question and the last question with him was simply one of duty, "Is this what I ought to do?" Yet this also is true, that the more he gave, the more freely and delightedly did he give what he thought he ought to give. Is not this the record of one who felt deeply his individual responsibility, and regarded his life, his powers, his possessions as a sacred trust from God? "It is enough for the disciple that he be *as* his Master," show in his life and character *some* of those excellences of spirit which in their fulness the Lord Jesus by His example and precepts commends and commands. Fidelity in life's stewardship is the most prominent feature in Mr. Hitchcock's character. This one side of his life stands forward in the general survey as that on which, as a cornerstone, was built up his one aim and his high success.

He made a public profession of religion in connecting himself with the Old South Church in Boston, June 23, 1827, then under the pastoral care of Rev. Dr. Wisner. He transferred his membership to the church in Brimfield in 1838. Mr. Hitchcock was a great sufferer. Nervous debility was the occasion of deafness and distressing forms of dyspepsia. When he was prevented in his later years by his bodily infirmities from personal presence in the meetings for worship or for business, the church always found his counsel a sure resource when in need of advice, and his purse a main dependence in case of extraordinary expenditure.

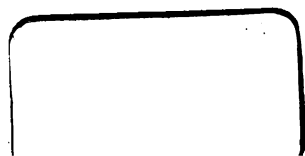
Never demonstrative, he yet always comported himself in his daily habits of life consistently with the religious principles which he had in early manhood avowed. Rapture of religious

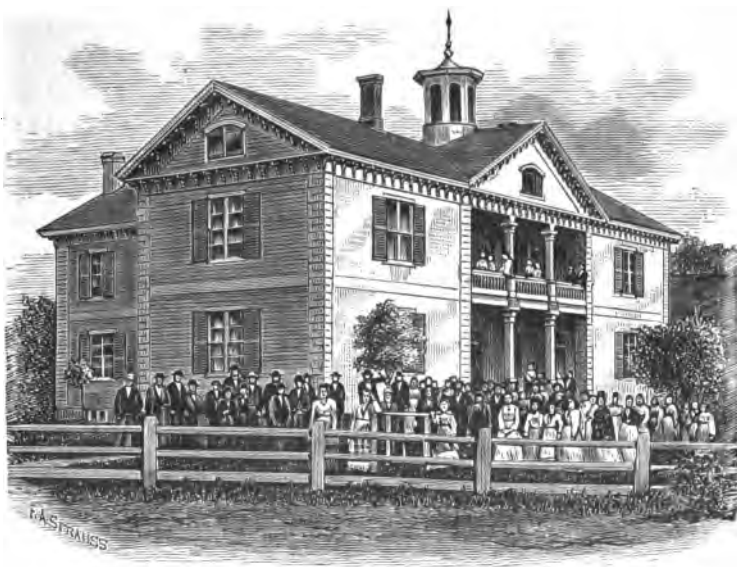
sociation \$25,000, to be used in completing and furnishing that part of the Congregational House in Boston which is designed for the reception of its libraries. Every man of reputed wealth and benevolence must expect in these days to be harassed as well as favored by numerous solicitations for pecuniary assistance. Mr. Hitchcock's papers show that he had given in small sums a large amount in response to such solicitations. His donations to institutions, as appears from published statements, amounted in the aggregate to very nearly \$650,000.

enjoyment was foreign to his nature ; he neither expected nor experienced it ; yet his love to his Divine Redeemer and to his fellow-men was not "cold and fitful as a winter's sun." His religion was more like the atmosphere than like the light, something felt but not seen ; and felt, not as a thrill or as an inspiration, but as the gently-moving, steady-moving breath of life. Such deep personal religion was the mainspring of his character and conduct, more prominently so in his last years of quiet seclusion ; such also constituted his support in death.

"Serving the Lord with all humility of mind," "with unfeigned faith," he believed that to the faithful servant of Christ "to die is gain." The last utterances which the writer, who was formerly his pastor, heard from his lips were in tearful avowal of his consciousness of sinfulness and weakness, yet also of unwavering hope of eternal life through the atoning love of that Divine Redeemer "who hath purchased His church with his own blood."







## THE HITCHCOCK FREE HIGH SCHOOL.

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THE following historical statement of Mr. Hitchcock's donations to the Free School established by him in Brimfield will furnish additional material for a just and proper appreciation of his principles, motives, and methods. And the record is here given, as it will be of interest to many to whom it would not otherwise be accessible.

Mr. Hitchcock's original idea was to leave by will, for the benefit of his native town, a certain sum of money to be used in establishing and maintaining a school of the highest grade, such as is contemplated by the laws of Massachusetts regulating the public-school system of the State, but not required by law in communities that have no larger population or valuation than Brimfield now has. This purpose was modified at

the suggestion of his friend and physician, Dr. Ebenezer Knight, who represented to Mr. Hitchcock how much better it would be to do at once what he intended to do, so that he might himself witness and enjoy the results of his beneficence. Accordingly Mr. Hitchcock embodied his proposition in a letter, which he addressed to the Town of Brimfield, and designed to have read in the Annual Town Meeting, April, 1854. No action, however, appears from the records to have been taken by the citizens at that time. In February, 1855, at the solicitation of Rev. Jason Morse and others interested in securing the establishment, Mr. Hitchcock renewed his proposition in the following letter, which he addressed to the citizens generally :—

“The undersigned proposes to appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars for the purpose of endowing a Free Grammar School<sup>1</sup> in the town of Brimfield, the income of which fund is to be permanently devoted exclusively to defraying the expenses of instruction in said school, subject to the conditions and restrictions hereinafter expressed.

“1. The foregoing fund shall be conveyed to and held by nine Trustees, who shall be incorporated so as to become capable of holding and managing property, and of filling vacancies that may occur from time to time in their number.

“2. The sum of four thousand dollars shall be raised by subscription, or otherwise,<sup>2</sup> and paid to said Trustees, to be used and expended by them as follows, to wit : First, In procuring a central and eligible site, and erecting thereon a substantial building for the school, and in procuring the necessary furniture and apparatus. Secondly, The residue, which shall not be less than one thousand dollars, shall be set apart and invested as a fund, upon good security, the income of which

<sup>1</sup> The school was incorporated April, 1855, under the corporate name of the “Trustees of the Brimfield Free Grammar School,” and opened December of the same year. In June, 1856, the name was changed by Act of the Legislature to “Hitchcock Free Grammar School,” and in March, 1871, to “Hitchcock Free High School”; and by the same Act the school was authorized to hold real and personal estate to the amount of \$100,000.

<sup>2</sup> The amount contributed by the citizens of Brimfield was \$4,862.25, of which amount Mr. Hitchcock gave \$500 in addition to the original endowment.

shall be exclusively applicable to the expense of repairs, insurance, and other incidental expenses, and to rebuilding the building, if at any time necessary.

"3. The first Board of Trustees<sup>1</sup> shall be appointed as follows: Five of the number shall be nominated by myself, and the other four by the subscribers, or the major part of them in number. All vacancies thereafter occurring shall be filled in such manner as may be provided in the Act of Incorporation. No person shall be eligible as a Trustee who is not a resident of the town of Brimfield.

"4. The title to said site and building shall be vested in said Trustees. They shall elect such officers from their own number as they may see fit, and shall exact bonds, with suitable penalties, from such officers as may be charged with receiving or disbursing moneys or holding funds.

"The Trustees shall keep a record of their doings, which, with all papers belonging to the Trustees, shall at all times be subject to the examination of the Trustees, also of myself and my legal representatives, and of the School Committee of the town of Brimfield for the time being. No Trustee or officer of the Board shall receive any compensation for his services.

5. "The Trustees shall have the sole management of said building and fund. They shall never suffer either to be used for the promotion of sectarian or political purposes, but shall restrict their use to purposes of mental instruction and information. But nothing herein shall be construed as excluding the Bible as a text-book in the school, or as restraining the teachers employed from impressing upon the pupils their moral responsibilities or the truths of Christianity. Nor shall the occupation of a part of the building, with the consent of the Trustees, for a Town Library, or other strictly educational purposes, be deemed inconsistent with a rightful use of the building.

6. "It is the declared intention of the donor of the fund to make said Grammar School free to the children who are inhab-

<sup>1</sup> The members of the original Board of Trustees were Henry F. Brown, Newton S. Hubbard, Alfred L. Converse, Abraham Charles, Joseph L. Woods (appointed by Mr. Hitchcock); Rev. Jason Morse, Gilman Noyes, John Wyles, and James S. Blair (appointed by the subscribers).

itants of this town, as far as can be accomplished by the revenues of this fund, and of *such a grade* that young men may be fitted for college or for the business of life.<sup>1</sup> The fund of ten thousand dollars shall never be used for any purposes but those of instruction in said school. Said school shall never be converted into a Primary School, but the pupils for admission must first have attained a suitable age,<sup>2</sup> such as the Trustees may designate, and a certain degree of proficiency in their studies, to be determined by examination, under the direction of the Trustees. Such rules may be adopted by the Trustees for the government of the school as they may deem expedient, provided said rules be not repugnant to those laws regulating the higher schools of this Commonwealth.

"In case of applications for admission from other towns, these may be granted, provided they would not deprive the children of the town of any of the advantages of this endowment; but in all such cases a suitable tuition may be exacted.<sup>3</sup> An assessment may be levied upon each pupil to defray the expenses of fuel, lights, etc.

"7. The Trustees shall cause said school to be kept forty-four weeks<sup>4</sup> in each year, and in case the income from said fund shall in any year amount to more than the amount necessary to defray the expenses of instruction for such year, the excess shall be added to the principal fund, and in no case shall any part of the principal be expended for defraying the expenses of instruction.

"8. The building shall be kept fully and constantly insured.

<sup>1</sup> When Mr. Hitchcock made his donation of \$100,000 to Amherst College, to establish scholarships in that institution, one of the conditions of the gift was as follows: "During my life-time I reserve to myself the privilege of nominating any student or students of the college to these scholarships, if at any time I should see fit to do so. I also reserve the same privileges which I should enjoy, if living, to the Board of Trustees of the Hitchcock Free High School in Brimfield, to nominate any student or students to these my scholarships, after my decease."

<sup>2</sup> The age designated by the Trustees is thirteen years. See Catalogue of School.

<sup>3</sup> Since June, 1871, no tuition fees have been required from non-resident scholars. The school is now free to all applicants of suitable age and qualifications the number that can be accommodated being the only restriction practically.

<sup>4</sup> By consent of Mr. Hitchcock, in May, 1868, the number of school weeks was changed to forty.

"9. There shall not be less in any year than three terms of the school, of eleven weeks each ; but the meaning and intention is to have the school continued forty-four weeks every year, unless prevented by unavoidable circumstances.

"10. If the trustees shall wilfully and unreasonably refuse or neglect to comply with the provisions of this instrument, then the fund herein appropriated by me shall be forfeited and revert to myself or my legal representatives.

"S. A. HITCHCOCK.

"BRIMFIELD, Feb. 21, 1855."

In February, 1864, Mr. Hitchcock made an additional donation of \$5,000 to the Fund for Instruction, on condition that a specified enlargement of the school building be made. For this purpose the citizens of the town contributed \$1,150.

In July, 1866, Mr. Hitchcock added \$5,000 to the Teachers' Fund, and in May, 1868, he gave \$5,000 to be held as a permanent fund, and to be called the "Hitchcock Fund for Miscellaneous Purposes." The object of the fund is clearly defined by him in one of the conditions, as follows :—

"The income, and only the income, of said fund shall be faithfully used and applied, from time to time, for the purchase of a library of such standard books of reference, history, and general information as are necessary, proper, and useful for the teachers and scholars who are, or hereafter may be, connected with the school. Also for the purchase of such chemical and philosophical apparatus, and other instruments and means, as are or may be necessary and useful for the proper elucidation, illustration, and instruction of the several studies and branches taught in said school.

"They may also purchase such musical instruments as are necessary and proper for devotional and other exercises of the school."

Another condition of the gift was as follows :—

"The Trustees shall set apart and fit up in their school building sufficient and suitable rooms for the safe keeping and preservation of the books, apparatus, and other articles procured with the income of this fund, but the expense thereof shall not be a charge upon the income of the fund herein established."

In December, 1869, an addition of \$10,000 was made to the Fund for Instruction.

Mr. Hitchcock made his last donation of \$40,000 in June, 1871. Of this sum \$7,000 was used for enlargement and alteration of the school building; \$5,000 was made a permanent fund for accumulation, the income to be used at any time for rebuilding or enlarging the school building. The remaining sum, \$28,000, was added to the Fund for Instruction, according to the following conditions :—

“The remainder of the sum herein appropriated by me, viz. the sum of twenty-eight thousand dollars, is to be held, invested, and managed by said Trustees, and the income only expended, upon and under the same conditions and restrictions as apply to the fund of ten thousand dollars paid by me when the school was established, subject, however, to the following modifications, viz. Should the income from all the funds, given by me to defray the expense of instruction in said school, prove to be more than is required for that purpose, then such part of the yearly income of the foregoing fund as is not required for that purpose, may be applied to defray any other legitimate and proper expense of the school which the Trustees may deem calculated to promote the best interests of the same; provided, also, that so far as *pupils from other towns* can be accommodated at the school, and not deprive the children of the town of any of the advantages of the same, they shall be received upon the same terms as resident scholars.

“Provided, also, that whereas instruction in instrumental music has lately been added to the other branches taught in the school, and whereas there may be a larger demand therefor than is consistent with due attention to other studies, or can be supplied from the funds of the school, the charging of tuition therefor to both resident and non-resident scholars shall be left to the discretion of the Trustees.”

The school has now been in operation for nearly twenty years, with constant and increasing prosperity. The successive donations it has received from its founder are a convincing and gratifying proof of the satisfaction which he had in the original endowment. The several changes, as well as addi-

tions, which he made, indicate the deep and growing interest which he took in its management and success. The people of Brimfield may well hold in high esteem the memory of one who has done so much for the welfare of his native town, and cherish the future growth and usefulness of the Hitchcock Free High School as a sacred trust now committed to their keeping.



